

COLOR PHOTOS BY ANDERSON



Installing controls for new children's airplane ride on Seaside Heights boardwalk.



Ready for sea, aptly named "Sea Robin" is launched at Hoffman's Boatyard in Brielle.



Overhauling motor of a whirling ride, one of Point Pleasant boardwalk's amusements.

AWAKENING

Memorial Day Marks Start of New Year for Most Shore Resorts Which Spent the Better Part of Spring Repairing Ravages of Winter

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

PRECISELY at 11 a.m. on Memorial Day, comely Miss Atlantic City will trip daintily down to the restless surf, "turn" a giant gilded key in an imaginary lock and then return amid cheers to hand the key to the captain of the Atlantic City Beach Patrol. Officially (for Atlantic City's press bureau, at any rate) the Atlantic Ocean will have been "unlocked" for bathing.

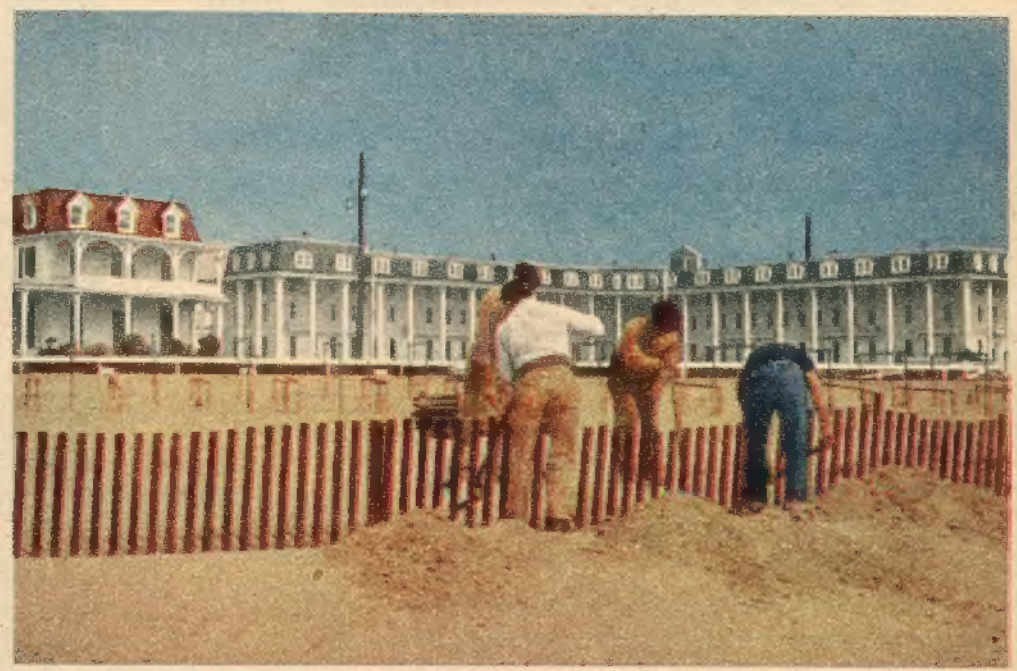
This unlocking is a relatively uncomplicated thing these days. Once upon a golden age Atlantic City did it up blue. "King Neptune" and a regal

court of beauties performed the gilded key bit in a costumed manner that no photographer could resist. Carl Bie-miller told the story in *Holiday Magazine* of a man suffering from "mal de civilization" who some years ago wandered out on the Boardwalk during the ceremony.

"What's going on?" asked the bewildered onlooker. "Why, they're unlocking the Atlantic Ocean," said a helpful soul. "That's King Neptune."

The visitor stamped his foot on the Boardwalk. "This thing seems solid

(Continued on Page 24)



When sand fences come down in Cape May it's sign that summer isn't far behind. Congress Hall is in background.

This is the 14th of a series of articles on the New Jersey Shore. Next week's installment will consider the history of the state's (Intracoastal) Waterway.

SHORE 'AWAKENING'

(Continued from Page 19)

enough," he said, as he tacked off into the crowd.

THE "unlocking" is a pleasant episode of folk lore which hurts no one, but it no longer means fully what it did in King Neptune's day. New Jersey's shore is no longer bounded by Memorial Day-Labor Day limitations, any more than there is validity to the once rigid belief that white shoes were insufferably gauche on May 29 and becomingly chic on May 30.

True enough, the great pleasure-seeking crowds are not commonplace until Memorial Day and after—excepting, of course, the annual Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday throngs. After Memorial Day millions of people merely await the closing of schools to get out from under the cold city pallor and into a nice warm coat of tan.

Nevertheless, two intimately related factors have helped diminish the importance of Memorial Day as an official "unlocking" day. These are the Garden State Parkway and the huge upswing in all-year living the Parkway has generated along the shore.

This is what the Parkway does: Let a warm March sun beam through and automobiles roll shoreward, just as surely as daffodils push through the soil. People come to look at their boats, to see if their roofs are leaking, to bring down dishes, to sit by their lagoons and dream. "Bumper to bumper" used to be a phrase reserved for reporters writing of the July 4 weekend. Now it gets dusted off every bright spring weekend.

THERE is a yearning for the sea and, if they could, most shore aficionados would return much earlier than Memorial Day. This is particularly true since the Parkway has inspired the building of thousands of vacation homes beside the artificial lagoons in Ocean County. Here is where are tied up the boats whose hulls lure back devotees in early spring.

More important, the Parkway also has generated an upsurge in year-around shore living that must be reckoned as startling when compared with pre-World War II days. This is particularly true in the North Shore area, from Highlands to Point Pleasant and in a belt extending 10 to 15 miles back from the ocean.

Some two-score years ago a year-around resident in most North Shore oceanfront towns was a rarity. As one lifetime Ocean Grove resident recalls, "If we kids saw a light in a house near the beach, we figured it must be either a hermit or a burglar." Those days year-around living meant a long train haul to New York or Newark for the bread winner; few could earn a living all year at or near the beach. Those days are gone forever.

Nevertheless, regardless of Parkway automobile traffic in March or



Hull of "Little Mary" is prepared at a Brielle boatyard for another season afloat.

April or permanent residence, resort men have a different meaning when they talk about "year-around" business. They mean people spending money in hotels and on the boardwalks and in the amusement palaces. If that trade is to be considered the lifeblood of the New Jersey Shore—and surely it is at least the red corpuscles—then the lady with the gilded key is not without significance at that.

MOST shore resorts stretch happily just before Memorial Day, signifying an end to unbroken sleep which began shortly after Labor Day. Except for Atlantic City (and to some extent Asbury Park), every resort on the New Jersey coast pretty much silently folds its amusement tents and silently sleeps away the winter.

Not that the charms aren't there after Labor Day. They are. October is a delightful month by the sea and November can be. April and May along most of the New Jersey shore are much more pleasant than they are to the north and west. The catch is that vacations—schools and business—make no recognition of that fact.

Thus the deep sleep begins almost everywhere soon after Labor Day, although some golden weekends in September give an illusion of wide-awakeness. By November nearly every resort town is as dormant as a bear hibernating in the mountains. Foot-

steps echo hollowly at night on the dark, deserted boardwalks, and off in the distance on a crisp October night a wailing train whistle emphasizes the loneliness.

Possibly nothing is as dismal as a typical resort spot in winter. Shutters cover windows. Cottages stand empty and shabby. Storm-faded signs flapping in a January gale proclaim the wonders of a program given in the casino a summer ago. Rain beats against the faded poster bearing the face of the "name band" leader who thrilled teen-agers last August. Grimy windows hide furniture stacked in restaurant rooms where life abounds in summer. Yachts rest stranded in boat yards. All is still.

A RIDE from Cape May to Sea Bright in December or January can be disillusioning and depressing; this is a land which needs sunshine and vacationists to be alive. Yet, even as the sleep deepens, awakening begins.

There is much for amusement men to do between seasons. Thousands of boardwalk planks must be replaced. Hotel and motel rooms and grounds must be made livable again. Signs must be repainted, barrooms must be rechromed, ice cream machines must be repaired, kiddie rides must be made safe, beach sands must be sifted clean.

Hammers sound, saws whine, paint brushes glide silently over surfaces painted a score of times before. It takes no experienced eye to recognize that a resort town each year needs as much face-lifting as the perennial col-

lege widow getting ready for the next crop of freshmen.

The old girl who is the New Jersey Shore gets better looking all the time as May progresses. She wears a wig and heavy makeup, but by Memorial Day she has millions of suitors again. People who didn't love her in December love her now in May. Even her ridiculous-in-winter slogans—"20 Degrees Cooler," "Ice Cold"—make sense in the May sun.

FACE-LIFTING on the boardwalk is of interest to the year-around residents, of course, but few of these "new" people have so much as a tent staked out on the beach. These are people who in the main earn their livings in the industrial belt from New Brunswick to Newark; whether the boardwalk thrives or not is of moderate interest to them.

These are people who soundly reinforce a once-uncertain economy based on the whims of the public and the unpredictability of summer weekend weather. This new economic strength is growing at various speeds up and down the coast. It is firmly rooted in Monmouth County, growing at a rate that sometimes leaves local communities bewildered. The area of growth reaches as far south as Toms River, limited only by the distance a man is willing to drive to work.

Obviously changes will come in the wake of the thousands of new families who have chosen to live in the shore area. Already there are great changes—places like Asbury Park and Long Branch and Red Bank have found their shopping centers growing. Road-

ON THE COVER

"Trigger," one of the steeds gracing carousel at Point Pleasant, is "groomed" for another season of merry-go-rounding with young timers in the saddle.



Assembling new fence rails for a kiddie ride and replacing worn boardwalk planking occupies carpenters at Seaside Heights while at Atlantic City (left) workers use special vacuuming device to clean 'Walk.

side shopping areas have sprung up. Supermarkets have been built—for year-around business.

The vast majority of the newcomers work in relatively nearby industrial areas and they live in Monmouth or Ocean counties because they like to be near their boats, because they feel the air is cleaner and healthier or better for their asthma, because they want room for their children to romp, because they want to get away from the traditional but now rapidly overcrowding suburbs strung in a 30-mile arc around Newark.

THE Garden State Parkway has opened the New Jersey Shore to 12-month living; no questioning that. It now is as easy to whisk down to the Red Bank or Long Branch or Asbury Park areas as it is to get out to the northern highlands of Morris or Somerset counties.

Interestingly enough, a comment made semifacetiously by an Ocean Grove resident is worth noting. Asked why the North Shore has expanded so tremendously in year-around living, he replied that the Parkway had to get first credit. Then he added:

"Give second credit to the invention of the asbestos shingle!"

What he meant is that asbestos shingles and other new building materials have been an answer to combatting rapid deterioration of wood and paint and metal when the salt-laden ocean breezes of spring hang over the shore like sodden curtains. Other factors have influenced building—but don't

(Continued on Following Page)



Debris-littered beaches must be sifted clean before bathers make appearance on scene.

SHORE 'AWAKENING'

(Continued From Preceding Page)

dismiss the Ocean Grove man too lightly.

ON DOWN below Toms River, particularly out on the barrier beaches, most everything fades in the sad September song. Areas such as Barnegat Peninsula and Long Beach Island and the Cape May keys still rest basically on an old-fashioned economy rigidly bound by the closing of school in June and the ringing of school bells in September.

Aylward J. Walnut, a young professional geographer who lives at Barnegat Light, made a close study of business on Long Beach Island in the winter of 1956. He counted 602 business establishments—197 of them open, 405 of them shuttered tightly against the day when summer came again. Mr. Walnut found 51 out of 57 luncheonettes closed, 12 out of 29 grocery stores closed, 34 out of 40 commercial decks closed, 8 out of 10 bake shops closed, and so on.

Long Beach Island feeds off the vacationist. Only about 4,500 people live year-around on the 19-mile long island, although this figure is almost triple the winter-level population of 1930. In contrast to the 4,500 "winter" residents, some 90,000 people frequent the strip in summer.

Mr. Walnut found a significant thing, something pertinent to much of the New Jersey Shore—the fact that at least 10 per cent of the island's families spend a minimum of two months in Florida. Those who go for a few weeks reach an even larger total.

ON DOWN the beach, say in a town such as Sea Isle City in Cape May County, much the same condition exists. William Haffert Sr., resident of Sea Isle City for more than four decades and formerly its mayor for a long period of time, would like to see Sea Isle City gain more winter residents (it has increased about 500 from the 1950 level of 1,000 permanent dwellers). The thinking down on the Jersey Keys of Cape May, however, is that the soundest growth can come by inducing retired folk to buy or build year-around homes.

Mr. Haffert sees retired people this way: "They bring their money with them, which means they don't need jobs. They won't increase the school populations. They won't create any social problem; whatever mischief they're going to raise in life, they've long since raised."

For younger people in the southern New Jersey shore area, Mr. Haffert admits there are some disadvantages, centered mainly on the difficulty of earning a living. Still, as he puts it, "with a little imagination there are limitless opportunities." He found, for example, in a comparison study of Sea Isle City with Clinton, a similar sized town in Hunterdon County, that Clinton had about a dozen businesses that no one ever had thought to open in Sea Isle City.

There is another thoughtful view

of shore-time living expressed by Jack Lamping of Toms River, who mixes promoting Ocean County with studying the economics of the area. Mr. Lamping believes that three types of people come to the New Jersey Shore for year-around living:

THE young, who seek a future or a place to rear their children; the retired, who can supplement their incomes with some work in the summer, and, thirdly, those who have had a crisis—health or business failure, by way of illustration.

Mr. Lamping is himself a "crisis" fugitive to Ocean County; he came many years ago to get relief from asthma. This third category, incidentally, also includes "many a fugitive from success." These are people who have made a great deal of money elsewhere, then have sought the shore to escape the noise and bother and tension of piling up greenbacks far beyond the point of necessity.

People who live in the lonely stretches of beaches which close down after September must exhibit a degree of independence. As the local

So much for the off-season beach dwellers. It can be a mighty nice life, for those who like it.

For the flockers together, nevertheless, something livelier is vital and that can be gotten in Atlantic City, the only true year-around resort city in the north. Atlantic City owes its unique success to its ability to keep things generating pretty much on a 12-month basis.

Year-around living has brought a heightened weekend business to restaurants in Atlantic City and Asbury Park (and a few other areas). Thousands of couples swarm in Atlantic City on either Saturday or Sunday during nice weekends all winter long, have dinner at a restaurant or hotel, then return to their nearby homes. This is nice business, but it doesn't bolster the basic source of income—hotel reservations.

ONCE it wasn't difficult to promote winter hotel reservations. Thirty years ago Atlantic City had powerful appeal for New Yorkers through most of the cold months. Fugitives from Broadway found restfulness and warmth in

tic City incomes benefit at least indirectly from the city's amusement and convention superiority.

Pressure from other convention cities is being felt in Atlantic City, but significant numbers of giant convention arrangers feel the New Jersey shore queen is superior to places like Miami or New York or Chicago. One prime reason, intriguingly enough, is that in the winter there aren't as many distractions in Atlantic City as in most cities! This is a fine thing, in a city which often boasts of its distractions.

WHAT the arrangers mean is this: Get a delegate out on Absecon Island in January or February, make sure his wife comes with him, then arrange as much of the program as possible right in the hotel where he is staying. He doesn't stray much at all; he isn't running around madly trying to buy tickets to "My Fair Lady" or trying to see the floor show at The Latin Quarter. Atlantic City's lively Convention Bureau has stacks and stacks of letters from convention chairmen to back up this belief.

Conventions are fabulously big business in Atlantic City. The Convention Bureau works years in advance; already 22 conventions with an estimated attendance of 125,000 persons are lined up for 1962. Exactly what organizations they are is confidential information. Atlantic City doesn't tell its competitors any more than Gimbel's tells Macy's.

Despite the dollar-giving convention business, Atlantic City feels the same glow of pleasant anticipation that spring brings to all resort towns. The glow comes first when the Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday throngs jam the boardwalks and spend a bit on souvenirs, deepens when Memorial Day brings reviving business.

Spring at the shore is more than a revival of boardwalk trade or a rise in travel hazards for those who live year-around and roll over the Parkway to work, however. A magical changes take place.

WHOEVER travels the ocean avenues anytime from October to March is aware of an all-pervading stillness. If he has the heart or the curiosity to peek over the edge of the boardwalk in April, he sees the debris of a half-dozen months littering the strand—hugh timbers, crushed orange crates, roots of trees, pieces of furniture—all washed up from no one knows where.

But so few who think they know the New Jersey Shore well (including the boardwalk concessionaires) ever wander beside the forsaken sands in the months between Labor Day and the few days before Easter Sunday. Few who arrive in town for a convention or a Sunday meal peek over the boardwalk's edge.

More should see the shore in the off months. It's the one sure way to know the magic of spring at the seashore—to know that a frigid, seedy, abandoned, ugly stretch of sand can awaken between May and June to become the siren of allure and warmth which each year calls back so many to seek her charms.



Seasonal signposts guide motorists using Parkway to shore points.

saying goes, "Everyone is a tub on his own bottom"—finding much of his own amusement in simple things. There is a minimum of commercial entertainment, and New York and Philadelphia are too far away to run up solely for relief from boredom.

Still, semi-isolation has its advantages. Every person can pitch in to help at church or fire department or library benefits. Few people show great interest in keeping up with the Joneses, in large measure because it's hard to determine who is a Jones worth keeping up with and who isn't. Social distinctions aren't that clear cut out of season.

THERE is much to do, provided the doer has the yen for it. There is room for a boy and his dog to frolic on a deserted beach. There is open space to bring peace to a surf fisherman. Off-season is the time to seek shells in the sand. Out in the marshlands are duck blinds calling for hunters. There are migrating birds to watch. There is opportunity to sit quietly in the lee of a dune and watch through binoculars the ships at sea.

Atlantic City and, to some extent, in Asbury Park. They believed the promotion literature about how warm the Gulf Stream made the New Jersey coast.

Miami Beach has cut deeply into that winter trade. An airplane can whisk a New Yorker to Miami Beach in not more time than it takes him to drive to Atlantic City. Let's face it; Miami Beach IS warm in the winter, Atlantic City often is not. Stride up one of the streets leading away from the beach on a January night when the wind blows briskly in from the west if you dispute that.

Conventions are the essential reason why Atlantic City doesn't close shop after Labor Day, although in the interest of sound judgment, it must also be pointed out that Atlantic City is a real city of 60,000 all-year residents. Every business day as many as 4,500 automobiles cross the bridges leading to the city, carrying thousands of people to work in the offices and shops on the Boardwalk or on Pacific and Atlantic Aves., the two streets back from the 'Walk. Still, most Atlan-